



WATER RESOURCES RESEARCH GRANT PROPOSAL

Project ID: 2003TX94B

Title: Natural Remediation of Contaminants Along the Forgotten River Stretch of the Rio Grande

Project Type: Research

Focus Categories: Ecology, Water Quality, Hydrology

Keywords: metals, Rio Grande, fish, invertebrate community structure

Start Date: 03/01/2003

End Date: 02/28/2004

Federal Funds Requested: \$4182.00

Matching Funds: \$15599.00

Congressional District: 16

Principal Investigators: Ordonez, Catalina; Bain, Lisa J.

Abstract: The 200-mile stretch of the Rio Grande that flows from El Paso, Texas, and Juarez, Mexico to Presidio, Texas and Ojinaga, Mexico has been called “the Forgotten River” because it has seldom been studied and is sparsely inhabited. For example, the only two sampling sites along this reach of the river are just downstream of El Paso and just upstream of Presidio. Although much of the Rio Grande both upstream and downstream of this segment has experienced rapid development and worsened water quality, the Forgotten River flows through a region that is relatively undisturbed by human influences. The intent of this project is to measure the chemical and ecological gradient of this portion of the Rio Grande with an emphasis on how man-made contaminants may be decomposed and attenuated by natural processes. This study will involve sampling this section of the Rio Grande for water chemistry, metals, and such components of the ecosystem as the population and diversity of fish and macroinvertebrate populations. The study is expected to increase our understanding of how natural processes may improve water quality in geographically isolated rivers.

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